

# Newport



# Mercury

ESTABLISHED JUNE 12, 1758.

NO. 101.

NEWPORT, R. I., SATURDAY MORNING, JANUARY 10, 1852.

Number 4,680.

## POETRY.

### RAIN ON THE ROOF.

See the humid showers gather  
Over all the stately spheres,  
And the melancholy darkness  
Gently weeps in rainy tears,  
Is a joy to press the pillow  
Of a cottage chamber bed,  
And to listen to the patter  
Of the soft rain overhead.

Very tickle on the shingles  
Has an echo in the heart,  
And a thousand dreary fancies  
Into busy being start;  
And a thousand recollections  
Weave their bright hues into woe,  
I listen to the patter  
Of the soft rain on the roof.

There in fancy comes my mother,  
As she used to years ago,  
To survey the infant sleeper  
Ere she left them till the dawn,  
I can see her bending o'er me,  
As I listen to the strain  
Which is played upon the shingles  
By the patter of the rain.

Then my little scraggy sister,  
With her wings and waving hair,  
And her bright-eyed cherub brother,  
A serene angelic pair,  
Glide around my wakeful pillow  
With their praise or mild reproof,  
As I listen to the murmur  
Of the soft rain on the roof.

And another comes to thrill me  
With her eyes' delicious blue;  
I forget, as gazing on her,  
That her heart was all untrue;  
I remember that I loved her,  
As I never may love again,  
And my heart's quick pulses vibrate  
To the patter of the rain.

There is thought in art's bravuras  
That can work with such a spell,  
In the spirit's pure, deep fountains,  
Whence the holy passions swell,  
As that melody of nature—  
That subdued, subdued strain,  
Which is played upon the shingles  
By the patter of the rain.

## AGRICULTURE.

**MAXIMS FOR FARMERS.**—Do not sow your corn or cultivate your crop in any particular manner because your father did so. You may have followed in the footsteps of your grandfather, and agriculture was not well understood then, as now. "Prove these things, and hold fast to that which is good." If not, reject it, and try some other plan. Nothing of importance was ever yet gained without some risk. Experiment is the mother of science.

One acre well cultivated will produce more than two only scratched at, and with less trouble. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.

Never sow your grain until the ground is well prepared, just because your neighbor commenced sowing his. Prepare your soil well, and the battle is half won.

Do not have a superabundance of farming implements; but let what you have be the best kind, and keep them well sharpened. A sharp knife will cut twice as fast as a dull one and do much better.

When you build, have an eye to the convenience, but do not altogether lose sight of beauty. Nothing improves the look of a farm more than buildings neatly arranged and well put up, and the cost is very little more.

When you make a fence, make a good one. It may cost more at first, but will be less in the end.

Never plough in wet weather, if you can avoid it. Besides doing injury to the crop, it impoverishes the soil. It will not rain away.

**PLAIN FACTS FOR PLAIN FARMERS.**—Farmers are often complaining of the burden of high taxes that weigh them down. But it is a notorious fact that ninety-nine hundredths of our farmers lose and waste more valuable manures on their premises, annually, than would pay all their taxes for five years.

We think we hear some of our farmers say that we are mistaken, because they keep their straw and their cattle in a yard and make two or three hundred loads of manure in a year. True, but they lose forty per cent of this very manure by improper management of it. Generally it lies on a steep side hill below their back barns, with all the water from the barn running through it for nine months, washing out twenty per cent, of its value, and carrying it into the nearest run or creek, and then they haul it into their fields in August, and spread it out for two or three weeks, on the top of the ground, allowing the sun to evaporate twenty per cent more of its valuable properties, before it is plowed under ground, where it ought to have been before it was ever permitted to become dry. Here is the forty per cent, gone at two operations. Now three hundred loads of manure are worth five hundred dollars to the field. Forty per cent of this is two hundred dollars loss.

## SKEETCHED TALE.

### A LEAP FOR LIFE.

BY AN OLD SALE.

I am no romancer. The experience of my life has well taught me that "truth is stranger than fiction." The incidents detailed below are literally true. I am personally acquainted with the hero of the story, who has, since the occurrence related, commanded a vessel out of one of our neighboring ports. I happened to be at Havana at the time of his imprisonment, and was lying in the harbor when he made his escape. I was also with him in the Fox privateer of Portsmouth, N. H., during the last war with England, and have had long conversation with him in relation to the affair. And although the story may appear incredible, and a romance, yet it is strictly true.

In the year 1809, a brig commanded by a man by the name of Smith, sailed from a port in Massachusetts for Kingston, Jamaica, with a cargo of lumber. At this place she discharged, and took in Nicaragua wood for ballast, and proceeded to Havana, it being then contrary to law to take cargoes from an English Island. The brig arrived at Havana in the month of February, 1810, where she commenced loading with logwood from a Spanish ship which laid along side. After a while, the Spanish Captain and the American mate, whose name was White, became very intimate and friendly, so much so that Capt. Smith became jealous of their acquaintance, and by a number of petty devices sought to break it up, but without success. Capt. Smith was what is generally called a clever man, when not under the influence of liquor—but when he was, all went wrong, and at such times he took particular pains to quarrel with the mate. This state of affairs continued for some time, until his abuse being too outrageous for the mate to put up with, he asked for his discharge. To this the Captain would not consent, but told him he would pay him his wages if he would leave the vessel.

The mate acceded to the proposition—received the wages, and went on shore, accompanied by the Spanish Captain, whose name was Estefano.

There was a physician at Havana, a native of Massachusetts and an acquaintance of the mate's, with whom he took lodgings until he could get a voyage. The Dr. and White frequently visited a billiard room and had a game together, where they were often joined by Estefano. One night White and the Spanish Captain were playing for money. The stakes were quite small at first; but soon getting heated with wine and the excitement of the game, Estefano proposed to play higher—and at last threw down a doubloon, insisting upon his antagonist covering it.

White objected for a while, but Estefano urged him so strongly, that he met the stake. The game was played—and to his chagrin, the Spaniard lost. He was greatly enraged at the result of the game, and was all for fight. To avoid a squabble, White agreed to play one game more for two doubloons, declaring that he consented to do it merely to give his opponent a chance to get his money back; and that, lose or win, he would not play another game. The conditions were agreed to, and the game commenced. For a while the Spaniard had evidently the advantage, and the probabilities were greatly in his favor, but by a masterly stroke White turned the tables and won the game. The fury of the Spaniard was unbounded. He raved and swore as a Spaniard only can rave and swear—declared the stroke was unfair, and ended by striking White a severe blow, which he as promptly returned with the cue which he held in his hand, causing the Spaniard to measure his length on the floor. Several of the by-standers interfered and peace was restored. Shortly after this the Spaniard left the room. In the course of an hour or so, it being almost midnight, the Dr. and White started for home. They had arrived within a few yards of the house, when they were met by three men armed with swords, who immediately began an attack upon White. Being unarmed, and taken unawares, he would instantly have fallen a victim had not his friend interfered, and with a heavy cane, which he fortunately had with him, disarmed one of the assailants, who dropped his sword, which White hastily picked up and ran his antagonist, who pressed upon him the hardest, through the body. It proved to be Estefano, the Spanish Captain. Seeing one of their number fall, the other two took to their heels. The doctor and White also quit the place and arrived safely at their lodgings, leaving the wounded Spaniard to the care of some stragglers who had been attracted to the spot by the struggle.

The next morning White and the doctor were arrested and put in jail. Shortly after, an examination took place before a magistrate, the result of which was, White was convicted and the doctor acquitted. Strange as it may appear, the mate was convicted by the testimony of the two accomplices who attempted his life! The Spaniard, Estefano, lived three days after the affray, and was honest enough to state the whole circumstances of the case, acknowledging that White ran him through in defence of his own life, which he and the other two had determined to take. These facts were all preserved by the doctor for the final trial, not that they were sufficient to clear his friend. The trial was put off from time to time, and it was three months before it came on. It came at last, and White was arraigned. He had no counsel—no friend but the doctor. Here he was at the mercy of a Spanish Court, whose most tender mercy is cruelty. An English merchant, who had heard of the case, and who commiserated the isolated condition of poor White, volunteered to defend him.

Objections were made by the Court to the testimony of the doctor, but the Englishman strenuously insisted that his evidence should be allowed. After a long and heated debate, and with the aid of gold—the most persuasive of all arguments—the doctor was permitted to give in his testimony. In a clear and lucid manner, he related the circumstances of the case—stated that the Spaniard gave the first blow in the billiard room—that Estefano with two others attacked the prisoner on his way to his lodgings, and that it was by mere chance of White's getting possession of one of the weapons that he was not murdered. The confession of the Spaniard duly attested to, was presented, but all was in vain. Plain as was the case, the Court condemned the mate to eight years imprisonment in the Moro Castle.

It was on the 15th of May that White was placed in the dungeon of the Moro. His cell although not entirely dark, was dismal enough, being forty or fifty feet below the fort. Above this dungeon stands a strong fort, called "Moro Castle," which is situated on a point that makes the eastern side of the entrance of the port of Havana—Punta making the western side, also a strong fort. The entrance is quite narrow, not more than half a mile wide, with deep water. The Moro is a huge rock, perpendicular on the harbor side, and nearly so on the side facing the sea. The water is so bold at its base, that vessels of the largest burthen can approach within a few feet of the rocks. The rock runs up almost sheer about sixty feet to its summit. In the belly of this rock, nearly on a level with the sea, was confined the unfortunate mate. Not a ray of light nor a breath of air could reach him, save what came through small holes in the side of the cliff. He had no clothes except a pair of duck trousers, his provisions were served out to him once a day, and consisted of boiled bullocks heads and corn, with a jug of water. In this dark and gloomy cell he was to remain for eight long years—buried alive—with nothing to do—nothing to think of but his bitter fate. Dreary as was the prospects before him—so dreary at times when he thought of his far away home, that he would gladly have welcomed death. A fact which soon after came to his knowledge, added a ten-fold gloom to the horror of his situation. It was this—In the same dungeon with White, was a man who had been there eighteen years, whose sole crime was the smuggling of tobacco. He had been put there for one year, at the expiration of which he had probably been forgotten. He could not make his case known, and for eighteen dreary years he had been incarcerated there, hoping for release, until hope itself had expired—and there he expected to end his days. He had almost lost the power of speech, and appeared at times to be deranged. He had not been shaved and perhaps not washed since his imprisonment; and in this dismal rock, filthy and spiritbroken; suffering the greatest cruelty—with no one to see to his liberation, forgotten probably by every living being, save his keeper—his only crime the petty one of smuggling perhaps a few pounds of tobacco—here was the poor wretch doomed to linger until death brought him relief. The thought that such might be his fate, at times almost drove White to despair. Indeed, it was enough to shake the firmest nerve.

On entering his dismal abode, the mate was confined with iron on his hands and feet; but he was told they should be taken off at the end of the first year. Fettered thus, he lived on from day to day, expecting every moment to be set at liberty through the interference of the American

Government, as his friend the doctor had promised to make a proper representation of his case to the United States authorities and use all his endeavors to get him free. Alas! little had he to hope from that quarter, although he knew it not. A deeper pang would have rent his heart, had he learned the melancholy tidings of the death of his friend, which took place a few days after his imprisonment. No help from him—thinking perhaps that he was forgotten—feeling that he could not survive the term of his sentence—he began to think over a plan of escape. He calmly reviewed his situation, and a thousand projects suggested themselves, not one of which seemed practicable. Often his mind was worked up to the highest pitch of desperation, at which times he would resolve to rush upon his keeper and obtain his liberty or end his misery by provoking the guard to dispatch him—when lo! he would feel the shackles on his hands and feet, and his powerless state becomes fully apparent to him.

"Oh, if I could only free myself of these irons," he would exclaim, "I would die or be free."

He would often examine the shackles and bolts, but they appeared too strong to be broken. There was a fore-lock in one end of the bolts, which were driven through and twisted, the other end being headed. At times he indulged the hope that his hands and feet would become so emaciated that he could pull them through the shackles—but then he thought by that time his strength would be so reduced that he could effect nothing.

He had been pondering one day over the changes that had presented themselves to his mind—weighing this and balancing that—when he said to himself, "This is thinking without acting, this will never do; if I am to accomplish anything, I must make a beginning!" and starting to his feet, he went to the side of the dungeon and groped his way, feeling at the same time along the rough wall, he at last found a crevice in the rock. With much difficulty, and after repeated trials, he succeeded in entering the point of the fore-lock a little into the opening and giving it a twist, to his great joy he had straightened it considerably. With renewed vigor he continued his work, until success crowned his labors—the fore-lock was out of the bolt and his hands were free!

This he looked upon as one step accomplished; the freedom of his hands was a great relief to him, and he had the use of them all the time, save when the man brought him his meat and water; and as he always came at a stated time, (about half an hour after sunset,) he was in no danger of being caught with his irons off. He now began to work on the forelock of his feet irons, and with the aid of the hand shackles and bolts, he at last succeeded in freeing himself entirely from his fetters.

He had as yet no fixed plan of escape, and he now waited, hoping and fearing, one moment adopting a method by which he thought he might succeed—the next abandoning it as altogether infeasible. Small indeed was his chance of escape—it was a thousand to one against him. There was the man who brought him his food—his especial keeper—to be got rid of—and then there were the guard in the fort to be eluded—and after this the rock to be cleared. The undertaking was desperate, so desperate that one might indeed quail in prospect of it. But the desire for liberty was strong within the heart of the prisoner and to secure it he was willing to brave death in its worst form—for without liberty, he felt that life was poor and valueless. Nerving his soul for the task, hope whispered to him an assurance of success. He felt with the poet—

"What are fifty—what a thousand slaves  
Match'd to the sinew of a single arm  
That strikes for liberty!"

After adopting and rejecting many plans White came to the conclusion at last to kill the keeper who brought him his food, rush to the top of the Moro and leave the rest to fate. He waited, agitated and impatient for the appointed hour. The time flew swiftly by, and at his usual hour the man entered the dungeon with the daily supply of food—little dreaming of the danger that threatened him. As he deposited the articles within the prisoner's reach, White looked at him steadfastly for a moment and strove to steel his heart to the pleadings of humanity. But no—he could not do it—he could not find it in him to kill the poor creature—the thought made him shudder, and this time he suffered him to depart. "To-morrow night I will do it," thought White—"but not to-night—not to-night."

To-morrow night came—and again the courage of the prisoner failed him—rather his feelings of humanity triumphed—he

could not nerve his arm to strike the blow. "Would to heaven there was any other alternative!" thought he, as the doomed keeper, unconscious of his peril, slowly turned and left the dungeon—"would that this man, who has never injured me—against whom I have not the slightest ill-will—might be saved!" His very soul recoiled at the idea of striking him down and murdering him in cold blood. But he felt it must be done if he would escape a thralldom worse than death, the man stood in his way, and must be removed, although he cursed the necessity which imposed the fearful deed upon him.

Nearly all that night the prisoner paced the narrow limits of his cell. Thought was too busy for sleep. If he closed his eyes for a moment, fancy floated in deeds of blood and violence, and he found no rest. At times he imagined the terrible task was accomplished—the fatal blow given—and stark and ghastly the door keeper was stretched out before him dead—the immortal spirit quenched by his hand—the stony eye glaring upon him reproachfully, and the pale, blue lips whispering "murder" in his ears. At such times he would start from his troubled sleep with the cold sweat streaming from every pore, and a convulsive throbbing of the heart. Thus passed the night.

The day brought no relief. He brooded on the terrible task before him. If he succeeded in overpowering the keeper, but one slight obstacle was removed. He was altogether ignorant of the difficulties to be overcome after he left the dungeon; all he knew was that his chance was small—that a bare possibility remained to him of escape. "Well, be it so," thought he, "better death than this lingering existence!"

Torn with conflicting emotions, the third day drew to a close—the dim light in the cell grew fainter—the sun went down. It was the last sunset ever witnessed by the poor keeper! As the light faded away, White relieved himself from his irons, and stood tremblingly awaiting the nightly visit of the man. He heard him descending the steps—every foot-fall smote his heart. Slowly he came, carelessly humming a Spanish air—his death song. He entered the cell—White grasped off the foot-shackles. The man stooped to set down the food and water which he bore, when White sprang up and with one blow of the bolt stretched him on the solid floor. The fearful drama had commenced. Without stopping to look upon his victim, he rushed up the long flight of stairs still grasping the fatal bolt. He reached a platform nearly at the top. A sentinel was stationed there, who, thinking that White was the keeper returning from a visit to the prisoner stood quite at his ease. A blow from White levelled him to the ground. The stroke was not fatal, and he soon manifested signs of life. The prisoner felt there was but one course to pursue, and he did not hesitate. He then mounted the other steps, when, lo, to his dismay, the first objects he saw were the soldiers relieving guard! What course should he take?

There is a moat about ten or twelve feet wide, running through this fort on the harbor and sea-side.

This moat is of great depth, and across it runs a draw-bridge. At the moment when the prisoner reached the final landing, the sentinels on the harbor side had been relieved, and the soldiers were crossing the bridge to relieve guard about the fort and prison. As soon as they got over, the bridge was taken up.

But little time was given the prisoner to think. He was placed in a fearful position. To retreat back to his prison would be death—to rush on the guard would be death. What should he do? A moment he hesitated, and a faint sickness stole over him as the helplessness of his situation stared him in the face. He shook it off, and gathering his energies he dashed past the guard and leaped the moat! It was a desperate leap, but he well knew that desperate deeds could alone save him. His left foot struck the opposite bank, and for a brief period, he balanced on the fearful edge, when by a masterly effort, his body canted forward, and he recovered a sure footing.

Here then he stood—the moat and the guard behind him, and a sentinel before him. He had gone so far that retreat was impossible, and there was but one alternative—go ahead! Dashing past the sentinel, who was so astonished that he scarcely offered resistance, he rushed to the brink of the rock. For a moment he stood there, gazing on the dizzy depth below him. It was an agonizing moment. Behind him were the infuriated soldiers; before him a yawning gulf! Sheer down for sixty feet, at the foot of which the foam of the waves could just be seen as they broke against the cliff—so distant that their roar came up faintly to the ear. Death was behind him—certain death; no more than was before him.

He looked wildly around. He saw one of the soldiers preparing to fire upon him—there was no time to be lost. Concentrating all his energies, and commending his soul to his maker, he leaped from the cliff!

Not a moment too soon, for the ball of the sentinel whistled over his head, as like an arrow he shot downward. Down, down he went; his feet pressed together, and his arms glued to his sides. He struck fairly, and cutting the water like a harpoon, he sunk far beneath the surface. Consciousness for awhile deserted him, but as he arose from his plunge and found himself unhurt, he struck out for the cliff, and swimming alongside, he clung to the rocks, thanking God who had preserved him so miraculously.

The sentry on the Moro concluded that the prisoner was drowned, notwithstanding the fort commenced firing minute guns, and the alarm quickly spread through the place.

It had now got to be quite dark, and feeling the insecurity of his situation, White took to the water and swam to a vessel anchored not a great distance off—it was the brig Happy Couple.

Boarding her, he informed the Captain of the strait he was in, and asked him to secrete him somewhere in the vessel. This the Captain said would be impossible, as every vessel in the harbor would be strictly searched, and if White was found on board, the Spaniards would put all of them to death.

"Well," said White, after hearing the Captain through, "cannot you do anything for me? Will you let me be murdered by them?"

The Captain told him there was the boat astern, and went below. The boat was immediately hauled alongside; some bread and water was tossed out to her, and one of the sailors threw White an old jacket. Showing off, he sculled her alongside the rocks as gently as possible.

It was now dark, and he remained quiet for some time, listening eagerly, expecting every moment to hear the clink of the rowlocks of his pursuers. About midnight, he commenced hauling the boat along by the rocks out of the harbor, until he got round the fort, when under cover of the darkness, and aided by the land-breeze, he sculled out to sea, and taking the current of the gulf, by daylight he found himself a long distance from the Moro.

Well it was he took this course, for the Governor at Havana laid an embargo on all the vessels in the harbor for one day, and each one of them was thoroughly searched. But the bird had flown. Three days out, White was picked up by a ship from New Orleans bound to New York, where he safely arrived. He has lately died in one of the New England States.

### Amos and the Nails.

There was a very bad boy by the name of Amos, who had a very good father. This father was grieved and troubled at the wickedness of his son—and had tried in vain to convince him of his sin and induce him to make efforts to reform. One day the father said to Amos, "Here is a hammer and a keg of nails I wish you every time you do a wrong action, to drive one of those nails into this wall." Amos said, "Well, father, I will." Before long Amos came to his father and said, "The keg is empty. I have used all the nails. Come and see." The father went to the spot, and found the wall black with nails. He said to his son, "Amos, have you committed a wrong action for every one of those nails." "Yes, father," said Amos. The father said sorrowfully, "What a bad boy you must be, Amos. Why will not you turn about and try to be a good boy?" Amos remained thoughtful for a few moments and then said, "Father I will try—I have been altogether too bad. I will try to be a better boy." Said the father, "Take the hammer, and for every good act you do, draw out a nail and put it into the keg." In a few weeks the boy came to his father and said, "Come, father, and see the nails in the keg again. Every good act I have done I have pulled out a nail. See, the keg is full again." "I am glad of it my son, but Amos, the holes are left—the holes are left. What did he mean, my little readers?"

### An Elegant Compliment.

QUIN being asked by a lady why there were more women in the world than men, he replied, "Granting the fact, madame it is in conformity with the arrangements of nature. We always see more of heaven than earth."

### The Ancient Catacombs of Rome.

M. Perret, during his sojourn in Rome, undertook to explore the Catacombs of that ancient city, and finally succeeded in doing it, with the whole of the 60 chambers and then connecting galleries, and has brought to light many hidden things of art. He has lately returned to France, with a collection of drawings which extends to 360 sheets in large folio.

"Of these 154 sheets contain representations of frescoes; 65 of monuments; 23 of paintings on glass, (medallions inserted in the walls and at the bottom of vases,) containing 86 subjects; 41 drawings of lamps, vases, rings, and instruments of martyrdom, to the number of more than 100 subjects; and, finally, 90 containing copies of more than 500 sepulchral inscriptions. Of the 150 drawings of frescoes, two-thirds are inédited, and a considerable number have been only lately discovered.

Amongst the latter, as we learn from the Revue, are the paintings on the celebrated walls of Platonis, said to have been the place of interment for a certain period of St. Peter and St. Paul. This spot was ornamented with frescoes, by order of Pope Damasus, about A. D. 365, and has ever since remained closed up. On opening the empty tomb, by permission of the Roman government, M. Perret discovered fresco paintings representing the Saviour and the Apostles, and two coffins of Parian marble. It is stated that, on the return of M. Perret to France, the Minister of the Interior entered into treaty with him for the acquisition of his collection for the nation. The purchase has been arranged, and the necessary amount (upwards of \$7,500) obtained by a special vote of the National Assembly. The drawings will be published by the French government in a style commensurate with their importance."

### Washington at Prayer.

Laurie Todd, that most indefatigable collector of choice legends of the past, in the course of an article prepared for the Home Journal, narrates the following anecdote of Washington:—I received the following anecdote of Washington, about fifty years ago, from the farmer referred to in the narrative. He was a member of the Society of Friends, who were, from their peaceable habits, lukewarm or opposed to the war of Independence. While the army lay in the neighborhood of White Plains, a farmer whose dwelling was near the camp, one morning at sunrise, while passing a clump of bushes, heard a moaning noise. Thinking his ox or his ass had fallen into a pit, he, on approaching the spot, heard the voice of a man engaged in prayer. He hid in the thicket, and listened, resolved to see the speaker. Having finished his supplications to heaven, this man of God came forth from his hiding place. It was George Washington. When the farmer entered his dwelling he said to his wife, "Martha, we must not oppose this movement any longer. The work is from the Lord. I heard the man, George Washington, send to Heaven such prayer for the cause and the country, that I know they will be answered." Thus Washington rose with the sun and prayed for his country; fought for it by day and watched for it by night."

### Things Interesting.

To see a husband, who before marriage used to take his lady love to ride twice a week, and lest she should get a dusty slipper or damp feet, always bring the chaise into the parlor—almost; and then lift her in with as much gentleness as if she was an infant or a basket of eggs—to see such a husband—having consented to take his wife out for the first time in six months—drive home a team that looks as if just returning from market, halt three rods from the door, and bawl to her to "come and get in."

To hear a woman accuse her lover of having lost all affection for her, because he happens to come home some evening and omits to give her as fervent a kiss as she used to receive in the days of her courtship after a month's separation.

To see a woman make home hateful, and then blame her husband for not loving it.

To hear the father of ten babies scolding the mother because home is not as quiet as it was during their honeymoon.

To see a woman expect to retain her husband's love without paying the slightest regard to those things by which it was won at the fire.

A HAPPY HOME, is a glorious and instructive sight; one which it does the heart good to see, and which, once beheld, leaves an ineffaceable impression on the mind.

To the honor of the sex, and in acknowledgment of the wise mercy of God, it must be admitted that women are more conscientious in their parental duties than men.



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